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## ORGANIZATION AND WORK OF THE OFFICE OF HOME ECONOMICS.

The Office of Home Economics is a subdivision of the States Relations Service, which is officially described as follows:

The States Relations Service represents the Secretary of Agriculture in his relations with the state agricultural colleges and experiment stations under the acts of Congress granting funds to these institutes for agricultural experiment stations and cooperative extension work in agriculture and home economics, and in carrying out the provisions of acts of Congress making appropriations to this department for farmers' cooperative demonstration work, investigations relating to agricultural schools, farmers' institutes and home economics, and the maintenance of agricultural experiment stations in Alaska, Hawaii, Porto Rico, and Guam.

The Service includes the Office of the Director, the Office of Experiment Stations, the Office of Extension Work in the South, the Office of Extension Work in the North and West, and the Office of Home Economics.

The Office of Home Economics is authorized to investigate from both the scientific and the practical standpoint the nature and uses of agricultural products utilized in the home for food, clothing, and equipment, and the methods of household work and management. It does this by original research, and by the compilation of the results of scientific investigations and of practical experience from other sources. The Office also arranges and adapts the information thus collected so that it may be easily used by extension workers, teachers, housekeepers, and any others who are concerned with the subject of home economics. Because the Office of Home Economics is an outgrowth of the former Nutrition Investigations, its work in food and nutrition is more highly developed than in the other subjects with which it deals. As soon as funds are available it plans to

carry on more extended research in clothing, household equipment, and household management, and hopes that the contributions of the Office to the development of the scientific study of these subjects may be as fundamentally valuable as its contributions to the science of nutrition. The importance of thus broadening the work of the Office of Home Economics is brought out by the fact that it is the branch of the Government primarily concerned with the final utilization in the home of the products of our agriculture and related industries. Economy in consumption is as necessary for the highest development of national prosperity as is economy in production and in distribution; and research in the principles which underlie the economy of consumption is as necessary to perfect the utilization of our resources as it has proved to be in the development of agricultural production and of marketing.

The specific problems studied vary from time to time according to the demands made upon the Office. For example, during recent years much time has been spent on food conservation, the national thrift movement, and other special activities required by the war and the conditions immediately following it.

In general, the work of the Office falls into several rather distinct divisions.

The work of the Experimental Kitchen includes such subjects as the following: Comparative studies of materials and methods used in home bread making; economy in gas consumption with different types of stoves and cooking utensils; the influence of different environmental factors on methods in home canning of fruits, vegetables, meats, and fish; the preparation and utilization of dried fruits and vegetables in the home;

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311

home jelly making, including the use of commercial and homemade pectin and of certain sugar substitutes; absorption of fat in frying batters and doughs made with different proportions of various ingredients and manipulated in different ways; the economical use of different cooking fats in various types of prepared foods; expedient and economical methods of utilizing different grades and classes of meat in the home.

In the respiration calorimeter laboratory studies have been made of the effect of diet and muscular work on body metabolism, of the amount of energy expended in the performance of certain household tasks, and of certain problems connected with the artificial incubation of hens' eggs, the wintering of bees and the storage of fruits and vegetables. These storage investigations deal with such points as the specific heat of different fruits and vegetables and the changes occurring in them under various conditions of temperature and moisture; although technical in character this work is of great practical importance because the information it provides is essential to the economical management of commercial storage plants and to lessening the waste of food material due to faulty storage conditions.

Studies of the digestibility of food materials by normal persons have included a large number of animal and vegetable fats, cereal grains, flours milled in various ways, raw starches of various kinds, meats and meat products, especially some of the less-used kinds, such as kid, rabbit, and horse meat.

In the work on meal planning, methods have been developed for showing the food values of the materials which make up the usual mixed diet. These include colored charts illustrating typical materials from each of the five food groups and the quantities of each which should wisely be in-

cluded in a day's or a week's food supply for the average family, photographs of meals chosen to represent different principles of meal planning, pictorial models of common foods shown in the amounts commonly served, and tables for "short cut" calculations of the protein and energy supplied by ordinary meals and diets.

Studies of household management include the amount of time actually spent on various routine tasks in the rural home, simplified methods of household accounting, and the principles underlying the choice and care of household equipment and clothing. It is the aim to make this material easily available to the housekeeper and to give reliable advice on such practical questions as how to select cleaning tools, how to plan the laundry work to save both labor and materials, what qualities to look for in textiles for different kinds of garments, what kind of floors and floor coverings are best adapted to different parts of the house, and how they should be cared for.

One of the interesting features of the work of the Office of Home Economics is the cooperation which it enjoys with many other branches of the Government and with private organizations. Besides being in close touch with the members of the extension offices in the States Relations Service and studying special problems at their request, it is frequently called on by other bureaus of the Department. For example, it has cooperated with the Bureau of Markets in testing the table qualities of different grades and classes of meat; with the Bureau of Plant Industry in studying methods of preparing little-known vegetables and fruits, such as chayotes, dasheens, and "aromatic" oranges; with the Bureau of Animal Industry in experimental studies of mutton, pork products, and shortening

fats; and with the Office of Farm Management in preparing charts to show the way in which the working day of the farm housewife is spent. It has aided the Children's Bureau of the Department of Labor in the preparation of bulletins and exhibit material, consults frequently with the Public Health Service and the Bureau of Standards, and has been called on by the War and Navy Departments for information on dietetics, and by the Treasury Department for material on household thrift. The Federal Board for Vocational Education and the Red Cross have asked its assistance in preparing outlines of courses on food and diet. It receives many letters and visits from officers in public institutions, teachers, club women, individual housekeepers, - in fact, all sorts and conditions of men asking for information and advice on all sorts of subjects from the nutritive value of some wild plant or foreign foods to how to take out old coffee stains or to clean window shades. As far as its small staff allows, the Office always tries to furnish the assistance asked, but it can not begin to meet all the legitimate demands made upon it. Because it is in such close touch with many lines of home economics work, it is in an excellent position to understand what investigation is most needed and where the results of such study will be most valuable.

The results of the work of the Office of Home Economics appear in bulletins and other publications of the Department of Agriculture, are distributed in mimeographed form for the use of extension workers and others, or are printed in scientific journals and in magazines. Considerable material, including the graphic material on meal planning, is still awaiting publication.

The list given below includes some of the publications of the Office

of Home Economics which have circulated most widely. There are many others, including both popular and technical discussions. Some of the earlier publications on food and nutrition have been used in the preparation of so many of the current books on nutrition that they may be said to form the basis of our general information along such lines. The compilation of analyses of American food materials, for example, is not only recognized as standard in the United States but was adopted by the Interallied Food Commission for official use during the war.

Titles of a few typical publications.

- \*14 Colored Charts showing the composition of common food materials (used in many schools and institutions).
- Farmers' Bulletin 142, Principles of Nutrition and Nutritive Value of Food (contains material which has been used as the basis of many text books and discussions).
- Farmers' Bulletin 808, 817, 824: How to Select Foods:
  - I. What the Body Needs.
  - II. Cereal Foods.
  - III. Foods Rich in Protein.
- Farmers' Bulletin 712, School Lunches.
- Farmers' Bulletin 717, Food for Young Children.
- Farmers' Bulletin 391, Economical Use of Meat in the Home.
- Farmers' Bulletin 256, Preparation of Vegetables for the Table.
- Farmers' Bulletin 807, Bread and Bread Making in the Home.
- \*Department Bulletin 469, Fats and Their Economical Use in the Home.
- Farmers' Bulletin 861, Removal of Stains from Clothing and Other Textiles.
- \*Farmers' Bulletin 1089, Selection and Care of Clothing.
- Farmers' Bulletin 1099, Home Laundering.
- \*Office of Experiment Stations Bulletin 28, The Chemical Composition of American Food Materials. (Standard table of composition constantly quoted in technical as well as popular books and articles).

\*The supply available for free distribution is exhausted but the publication is still purchasable from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.